

# CONTENT MARKETING TIPS FOR THE HOSPITALITY INDUSTRY



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Because the travel and tourism space remains extremely competitive, it's critical for hotels and hotel groups to establish and maintain a competitive advantage in their marketing efforts. One increasingly important way of doing this is to recognize what content marketing is and how to integrate it into your overall marketing efforts. Content marketing is the active process of creating relevant and sought after content with the goal of attracting your target market's eye, mind and pocketbook. Successful content marketers take the time to develop an integrated content strategy that focuses on the user experience, from market research to distribution, site copy to images and search engine rankings to measurement.

To help make your job easy, we've listed our top 30 marketing tips for the hospitality industry. We've broken the list up into 10 categories to help you stay on track as you integrate these tactics into your organization's content marketing strategy.



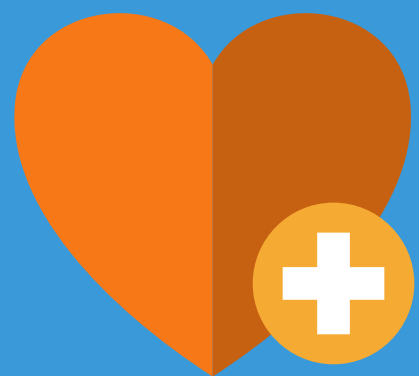
# PRE-GAME

## 1. Research the Reader

### Know Who You Want to Appeal To

This may seem like a given, but many times hoteliers, especially as launch time nears, find themselves pressed for time and attending to a million other details. Figuring out who your web content addresses gets lost in the shuffle. Before considering content for a website or social media channel, you need to go back to the basics and identify who exactly you need to be talking to — road warriors, occasional business guests, leisure travelers, retirees, families with kids, etc. You then need to take that knowledge and actively generate content that appeals to the identified groups.

*“Before considering content for a website or social media channel, you need to go back to the basics and identify who exactly you need to be talking to .*



## 2. Set Content Marketing Goals— Know Why You Need to Reach This Audience

Once you've determined who your target is, it's important to know why you are developing content for them. What is it you hope to achieve with content developed for your website, blog and social channels? *Is it brand recognition, customer loyalty, the ability to expose your hotel to new customers and expanded demographics?* Once all stakeholders on your marketing team can clearly state the goals of your content, those players should constantly evaluate any content ideas or opportunities against the rubric of how it does or does not achieve the stated goals.



# Your Image

## 3. Start with Professionally Written Copy



You wouldn't skimp on carpeting and furnishings for your hotel's lobby, so why let an amateur craft the online image of your hotel? Poorly written, unorganized copy will have site visitors bouncing from your site like a red rubber ball. Invest the time and money to hire a professional who can showcase your hotel.

## 4. Add Professional Photography

Perhaps the only thing worse than site content written by an amateur is photography shot by an amateur. Poorly lit, grainy photos won't sell your property, no matter how nice it is or what a deal the price is.

## 5. Use Professional Videography, Virtual Tours and/or 3D Imagery

Guests want to see exactly what they are getting when they book a room online. Highlight the hotel's exterior, public spaces, dining facilities, meeting rooms, guestrooms and bathrooms when shooting videos and developing virtual tours.



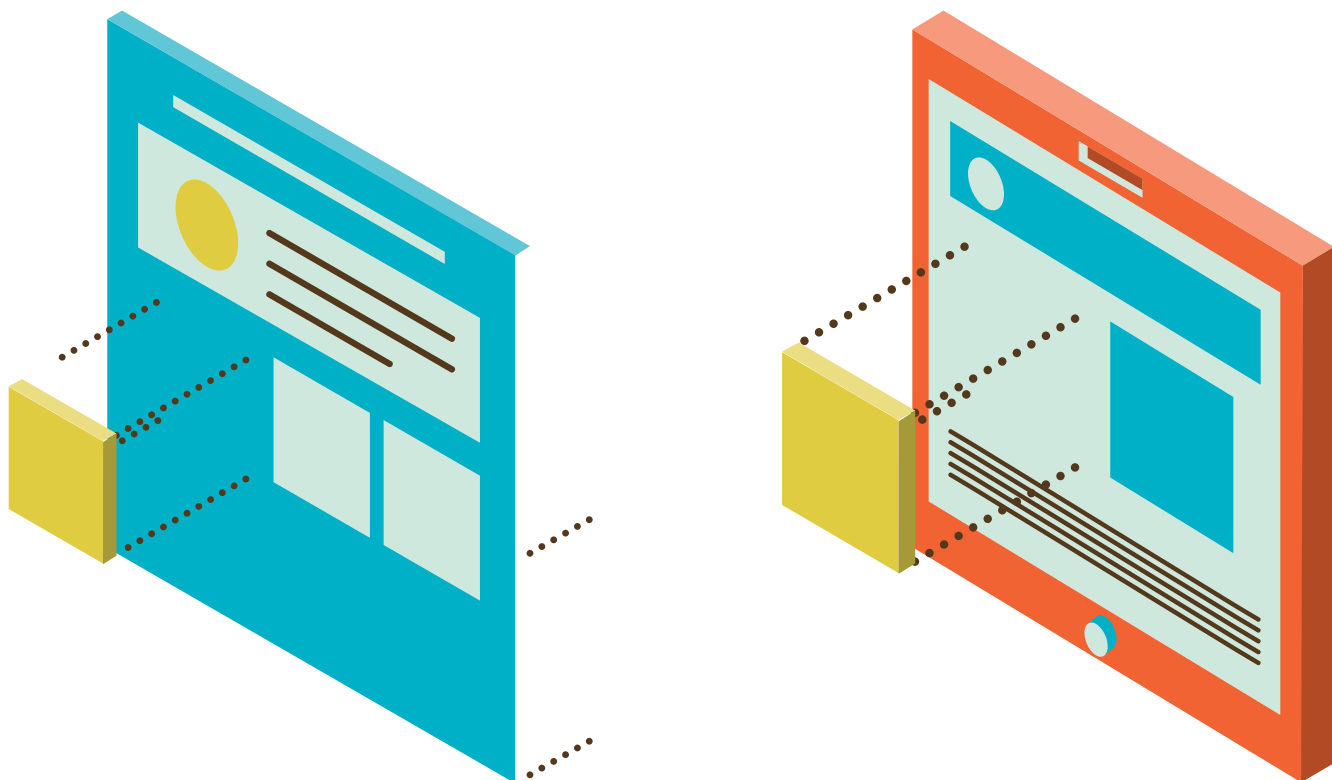
# STORYTELLING

## 6. Have a Style Guide and Stick to It

A Style Guide is your site's secret weapon. It's the behind the scenes playbook that keeps the online image of your site and all sites within your brand consistent. It spells out everything from font type and size to photo size and number of characters in blocks of copy. Thoughtfully develop and enforce rigorously!

## 7. Use Words that Sell

Sell the experience of staying at your hotel. Remember you are selling more than just a place to sleep. You are selling a weekend getaway or a seamless business trip. Find words that define your brand and enliven the experience of visiting your location.



## 8. Tell Your Story

Connect all of the outstanding elements of your hotel so they tell a story both visually and verbally. Take guests on a journey through your hotel from exterior to guest room using properly ordered photographs that hit the hotel's highpoints. Written content should flow seamlessly from paragraph to paragraph, page to page, setting the standards for guest expectations.



## 9. Be Unique

Each hotel has unique features that set it apart from all the rest. Is it your exceptional customer service and freshly baked cookies? Your outstanding location? Your free shuttle service? Your world-class restaurants? Help your guests discover what makes your hotel special.

# SEO and PPC

## 10. Use Highly Searched Keywords in Site Copy

Use professional tools to research SEO keywords potential guests use when they search for a hotel and expertly weave those keywords into site copy.



## 11. Provide User-Centered Content

Stick with content that informs and educates the reader.

## 12. Don't Overload Copy with Keywords

Keywords are important, but they should never be manipulated or over-used. They should be integrated into the copy to assist in providing readers with the information they need to find.

## 13. Link Building

Link Building is like word of mouth. The more quality sites (not link farms) that point to you as an “expert”, the more your credibility increases in the eyes of the search engines. Actively work to build relationships with sites in your area that would sensibly link to you. Remember that link building is not link sharing. Link sharing does little to promote your site’s credibility.



## 14. Google+ Local

Don’t forget to enter your hotel’s information and keywords into Google+ Local, where listings show up before organic rankings and include a map.



## 15. Balance PPC and SEO

Put time and effort into managing both PPC (pay- per-click) and SEO (search engine optimization) initiatives. Coordinate both by ensuring that staff working on each initiative coordinates approaches, keywords and timing of activities.

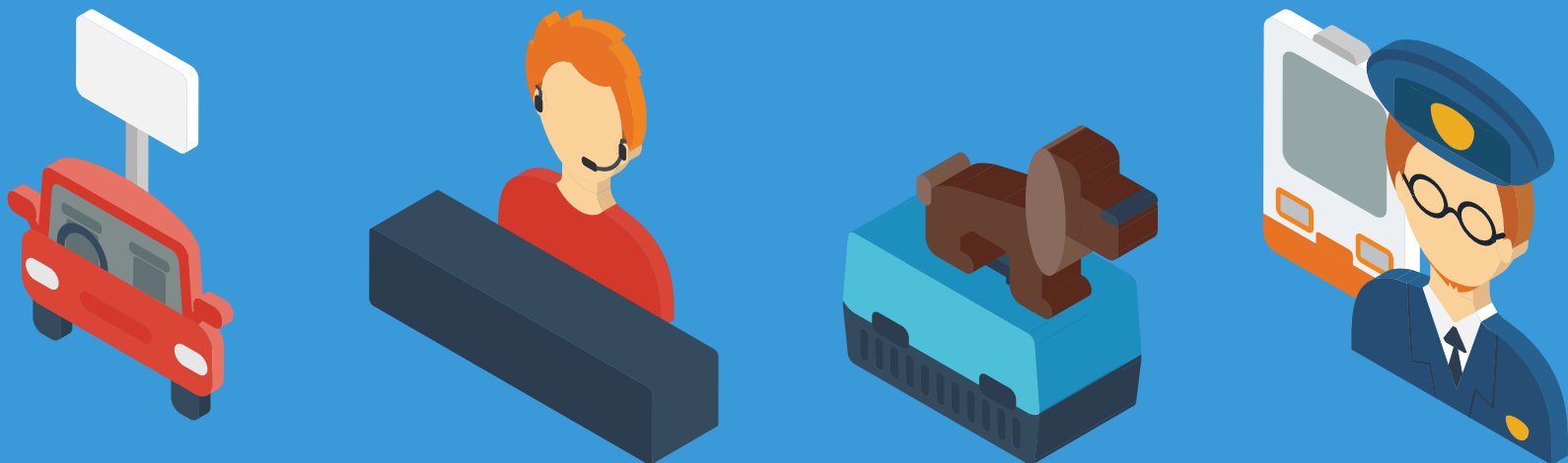
# EDUCATE GUESTS

## 16. Hotel Details

Make sure your copy covers everything your guests should know, including location, rooms, services, in-house dining and more. If you have washers and dryers in the rooms, clearly state that on the room's page. If you have free coffee in the lobby, make it known. Guests research and make decisions based on amenities, so leaving something out eliminates guests' ability to see the full picture of what your hotel offers.

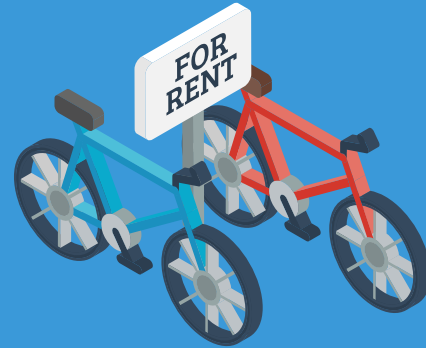
## 17. Local Area and Transportation

The first thing most travelers want to know when arriving in a new city is where they are staying in relation to the rest of the city. Is the hotel in the northeast section of the city? The arts district? Downtown? Help orient your guests by providing destination content about your location and providing public transportation options, including the nearest bus, train or underground stops.



## 18. Local Activities and Events

Take time to research the hotel's local area and include nearby attractions and activities that guests can enjoy during their free time. Be sure to include local events and remember to update events at least quarterly.



# TRANSLATION AND LOCALIZATION

## 19. Spend Time and Money on Translation

Engage a professional who speaks the native language fluently in order to capture the nuances of change from English to the translated language.

## 20. Localize Keyword Research

To retain highly searched keywords in translated copy, you need to have localized keyword research included in the copy. Don't just assume that your English keywords can be translated and still maintain high organic search rankings. They can't.



# VALUE PROSPECTS



## 21. Develop Appealing Special Offers and Update Them Regularly

Draw in guests by putting special offer packages together that encourage them to book. For example, a Romance Package around Valentine's Day can include room night, breakfast and carriage tour. Update seasonally. Distribute those messages across the right channels— website, Facebook, e-mail, etc.

## 22. Enable Private Groups to Piggy Back Off Your Site

It's a simple concept really, but allowing your guests to have their own, private web page hosted on your site allows them to provide that URL to their company, corporate guests, wedding guests, etc. They'll have an organized website for their event, meeting or party, and you'll get the bookings.

# TIMELINESS



## 23. Regularly Update Site Copy

Search engines reward refreshed copy. Guests look for timely information. Therefore, making regular updates to your site is a must. Regularly refresh special offers, information about local attractions, events and hotel details.

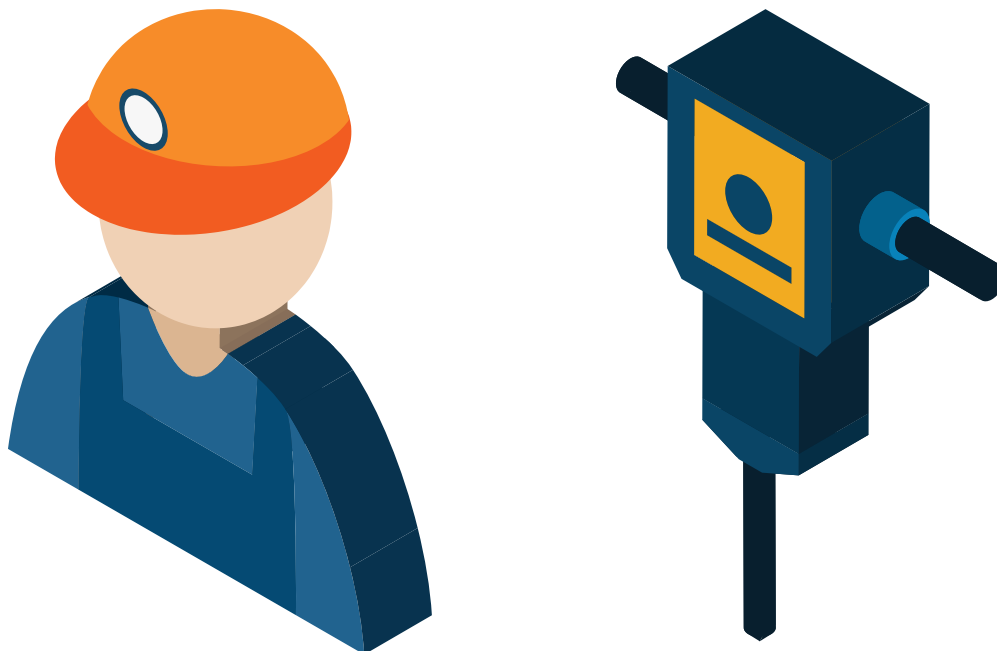




# GRUNT WORK THAT MATTERS

## 24. Tend to the Details

Remember to attend to the “little” elements of a site that give it a polished look and feel and assist with SEO—provide alt tags for photos, write short photo captions for images, properly size photos and fonts and use crystal clear images. Properly sizing means uploading the size that will actually display on the screen, otherwise it can slow down load speed of the page.



## 25. Make Individual Hotel Updates Simply and Quickly

Empower each hotel to easily update images, words, offers, maps, etc. Use an online “Message Board” where hotels can input updates they need made and your content management team can quickly and easily respond to those requests.

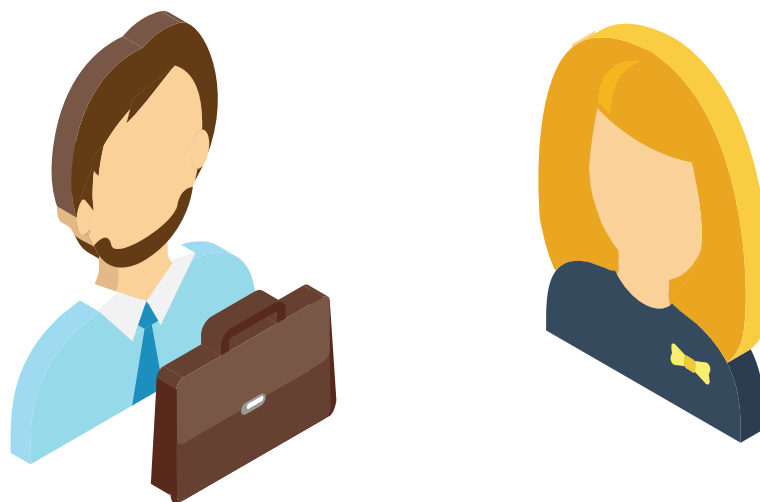


## 26. Check Facts/Maintain Databases

When was the last time you checked names, phone numbers and e-mails for all your hotel staff? General Managers, Regional Managers and Sales staff often change regularly. Be sure you keep your records up to date. This will ensure that contact information on your website is easy to update.

## 27. Interview Your Managers

No one knows the hotel better than the hotel's General Manager. Be sure to thoroughly interview the General Managers of the hotel before writing site copy. Content experts agree that you should tap into the 10-15% of staff who really "get" your product. Take advantage of their depth and breadth of knowledge.





# DISTRIBUTION

## 28. Coordinate Distribution of Offers and Information Across Channels

Think through all the touch points where potential guests may have contact with your hotel — website, e-mail, social media, etc. Craft and disseminate your content so that it works together to dialogue with your potential guests about your hotel.



# MEASUREMENT

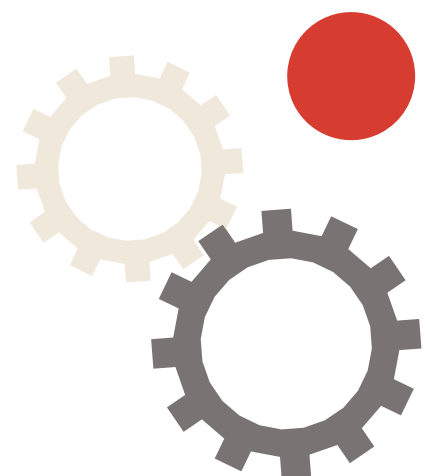


## 29. Monitor Traffic and User Interaction to Identify Hard Working Pages

Tap into your analytics. Make sure you understand what it is they are telling you. Look for pages that are highly trafficked and retain guests. Make more pages like these. Also look for pages that don't perform as well, identify why and make changes to (or eliminate) these pages.

## 30. Test and Tweak

Be willing to tweak pages and to conduct split tests to determine which pages, headlines, layouts, etc. engage with guests and those that don't.





In conclusion, when developing your content marketing strategy, be deliberate and dedicated.

Get buy-in from all stakeholders and work together as a team to ensure that the content on your hotel's website and social media channels is fully focused on engaging and attracting guests with its robust, unique nature.

Content isn't just an afterthought to fill space around a booking engine. Rather, content is the ticket that leads users to the booking engine.



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## About EnVeritas Group

EVG is a little global giant. From our offices in Greenville and London, we work with clients to tell stories. We are a group of strategists and yarn-weavers, big thinkers and painters, number crunchers and poets. Our strategies, rooted in storytelling and anchored by science, will move your needle. A lot.

EVG is a content marketing agency that offers social media marketing, website design, 3D imaging, and corporate training courses in addition to its traditional content marketing services like content creation, management and audit and strategy.

We've been in the content marketing business since 1999, which has allowed us to assist clients in a number of industries to achieve their digital objectives through targeted content and digital media campaigns. Our network of nearly 2,000 writers, editors, project managers, social media marketers, graphic designers and others gives us the ability to scale up for very large projects and then scale down for smaller ones.